

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): A substrate processing method comprising the steps of:
placing a substrate in a processing container;

supplying a processing gas into the processing container to establish, within the processing container, an atmosphere of the processing gas having a first pressure higher than atmospheric pressure ~~a positive pressure in a processing container~~;

determining pressure of a solvent vapor in a solvent vapor generator;

comparing the pressure in the solvent vapor generator with pressure in the processing container supplied with the processing gas; and

supplying the solvent vapor from the solvent vapor generator into the processing container in which the atmosphere of the processing gas having the first pressure has been established, when the pressure in the solvent vapor generator is higher than the pressure in the processing container supplied with the processing gas.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A substrate processing method as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the step of determining the pressure in the solvent vapor generator is carried out by firstly measuring temperature of the solvent vapor in the solvent vapor generator and secondly calculating the pressure in the solvent vapor generator based on the measured temperature.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A substrate processing method as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the step of determining the pressure in the solvent vapor generator is carried out by firstly measuring temperature of a liquid solvent before vaporized in the solvent vapor generator and secondly calculating the pressure in the solvent vapor generator based on the measured temperature.

Claim 15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (currently amended): A substrate processing method for processing a substrate to be processed, by supplying processing gas and solvent vapor to the substrate accommodated in a processing container, the method comprising the steps of:

supplying the processing gas into the processing container to ~~pressurize an interior of the processing container to establish, within the processing container, an atmosphere of the processing gas having a first pressure higher than atmospheric pressure;~~

~~elevating a regulating pressure of the solvent vapor before the solvent vapor is being supplied into the processing container, to a second pressure higher than [[a]] the first pressure of the processing gas in the processing container; and~~

supplying the solvent vapor, whose pressure has been regulated to the second pressure ~~elevated higher than the pressure of the processing gas in the processing container~~, into the processing container in which the atmosphere of the processing gas having the first pressure has been established.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): A substrate processing method as claimed in Claim 17 16, wherein ~~the step of controlling the pressure of the solvent vapor so as to be higher than the pressure of the atmosphere in the processing container is carried, in a closed space where the solvent vapor before being supplied into the processing container is present, by releasing the closed space for a constant period to discharge the solvent vapor of a constant quantity from the closed space so that the pressure of the solvent vapor becomes less than a first pressure which is higher than the pressure of the processing gas in the processing container~~ the step of regulating pressure of the solvent vapor includes a step of discharging an amount of solvent vapor from a closed space filled with the solvent vapor to be supplied into the processing container in order to prevent the second pressure from exceeding a predetermined upper limit value.

Claim 19-27 (canceled)

Claim 28 (new): A substrate processing method as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the solvent vapor is not supplied into the processing container before the atmosphere of the processing gas having the first pressure has been established in the processing container.

Claim 29 (new): A substrate processing method as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the solvent vapor is not supplied into the processing container before the atmosphere of the processing gas having the first pressure has been established in the processing container.